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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - SECRETARY OF STATE RICE TO MIDDLE EAST - EUROPE MIDDLE EAST SUMMIT
PARIS - TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

1. SECRETARY OF STATE RICE TO MIDDLE EAST - EUROPE
2. MIDDLE EAST SUMMIT

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

THE MIDDLE EAST SUMMIT IN SHARM EL-SHEIK, SECRETARY RICE'S VISIT TO THE REGION AND TO PARIS TODAY ARE PROMINENTLY FRONT-PAGED WITH ACCOMPANYING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE WITH MAHMUD ABBAS (RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO AND CATHOLIC LA CROIX). LE FIGARO'S FRONT-PAGE TITLE/CUM PHOTO CAPTION READS: "CONDI RICE TO SPONSOR ABBAS-SHARON TRUCE." LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION CARRIES THE STORY WITH A SIMILAR PHOTOGRAPH ON PAGE 4. EDITORIAL COMMENTATORS AGREE THAT "ALTHOUGH SYMBOLIC, THE SUMMIT IS A FIRST STEP AND A TURNING POINT." (SEE PART C)

AFTERNOON PAPER LE MONDE YESTERDAY CARRIED ON ITS FRONT-PAGE A REPORT ENTITLED "SCIENCE PO UNDER HIGH SURVEILLANCE" AS IT EXPLAINED THE EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN WHERE THE SECRETARY OF STATE WILL GIVE HER LANDMARK POLICY SPEECH.

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REPORTS ON THE RICE VISIT TO PARIS RECALL PAST TENSION OVER IRAQ AND SECRETARY RICE'S PHRASE ABOUT "PUNISHING FRANCE."
(SEE PART C)

THE REGIONAL PRESS IS ALSO VERY FOCUSED ON THE VISIT AND TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS. THE EDITORIAL IN MARSEILLES' "LA DEPECHE DU MIDI" (CIRC. 200,000) IS ENTITLED "AN AMERICAN IN PARIS." RENNE'S OUEST-FRANCE (CIRC. 800,000) NOTES ON ITS FRONT PAGE: "CONDOLEEZA RICE WELCOMED TONIGHT AT THE ELYS " AND HEADLINES ON PAGE 2: "FRANCE-U.S: A NEW WARMING?" BORDEAUX'S SUD-OUEST (CIRC. 315, 000) CARRIES A FRONT-PAGE PHOTOGRAPH OF SECRETARY OF STATE RICE GREETING MAHMOUD ABBAS, WITH THE HEADLINE: "PAX AMERICANA." EDITORIALIST PATRICK BERTHOMEAU COMMENTS: "AMERICA IS BACK, THE AMERICANS ARE TAKING THINGS IN HAND AND INTEND TO PUSH THEIR ADVANTAGE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME." LILLE'S LA VOIX DU NORD (CIRC. 316,000) HEADLINES ON PAGE 20: "CONDOLEEZA RICE IS COMING TO REVIVE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS." EDITORIALIST MICHEL VAGNER IN STRASBOURG'S L'EST REPUBLICAIN (CIRC. 320,000) WRITES: "IS THE 'WARRIOR PRINCESS' NOW, AS HER MUSICAL NAME SUGGESTS, CONDOLEEZA? NOT SO SURE. HER NICKNAME IS ALSO 'HER MASTER'S VOICE,' ALTHOUGH IT IS HARD TO TELL WHO HAS MORE INFLUENCE OVER THE OTHER."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

SECRETARY OF STATE RICE TO MIDDLE EAST - EUROPE

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"BARNIER IN RICE'S FOOTSTEPS"
PIERRE ROUSSELIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (02/08):
"WALKING IN RICE'S FOOTSTEPS, FM BARNIER WAS TRYING TO IMPOSE EUROPE AS A 'PARTNER' IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS. THE MOMENT FOR MAJOR INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES IS NOT UPON US YET, BUT MICHEL BARNIER WANTS TO 'ENCOURAGE AND ACCOMPANY' THE NEW DIALOGUE BEING ESTABLISHED IN ORDER TO BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO WEIGH IN LATER. HIS PRESENCE ALONE WAS MEANT TO SIGNIFY THAT THE U.S. IS NOT THE SOLE INTERNATIONAL PLAYER IN THESE PEACE TALKS. THE FRENCH AND THE AMERICANS HAVE VERY DIFFERENT APPROACHES, PROVED BY THE FACT THAT BARNIER PAID TRIBUTE TO ARAFAT BY VISITING HIS TOMB, WHILE THE RICE MOTORCADE SPED BY WITHOUT SLOWING DOWN."

"RICE IN PARIS TO TURN A PAGE"
GILLES BIASSETTE IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (02/08): "IS IT JUST A FAADE OR DOES THE SECOND BUSH ADMINISTRATION TRULY WANT TO RENEW ITS TIES WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION AND FRANCE? SECRETARY OF STATE RICE'S MUCH AWAITED SPEECH THIS AFTERNOON MAY GIVE SOME ELEMENTS OF RESPONSE. THE FACT THAT FRANCE HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR SUCH A SPEECH IS IN ITSELF A SIGN OF GOODWILL. NEVERTHELESS CERTAIN EUROPEAN CAPITALS REGRET COLIN POWELL'S

DEPARTURE, ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT A SURPRISE. NO ONE HAS FORGOTTEN THE LINE OF CONDUCT CONDOLEEZZA RICE SUGGESTED OVER IRAQ: 'PUNISH FRANCE, IGNORE GERMANY AND FORGIVE RUSSIA.' TODAY, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION SEEMS TO WANT TO PLACE RESTORATION OF TRANSATLANTIC TIES AT THE HEART OF BUSH'S SECOND TERM. ON THE FRENCH SIDE, THERE IS DESIRE FOR A 'NEW START' AND AS FM BARNIER SAID IN AN INTERVIEW ON MONDAY IN LIBERATION: 'IT IS IN THE U.S. INTEREST TO UNDERSTAND THAT NEITHER THE EUROPEANS NOR THE AMERICANS CAN DEAL WITH WORLD CHALLENGES ALONE.'"

"RICE TAKES THE INITIATIVE"

POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR (02/08): "THE CHOICE OF PARIS FOR A LANDMARK POLICY SPEECH IS NOT INNOCUOUS SINCE FRANCE TOOK THE LEAD AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ."

MIDDLE EAST SUMMIT

"A CEASE-FIRE: FIRST STEP TO SETTING PEACE TALKS BACK ON TRACK"

PATRICK SAINT-PAUL IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/02):

"SHARON SEES ABBAS AS A POTENTIAL PARTNER. NEVERTHELESS THE SUMMIT WILL BE MORE SYMBOLIC THAN ANYTHING ELSE. IT WILL MARK THE BEGINNING OF NEW CONSULTATIONS, BUT PEACE WILL NOT BE ON TRACK YET. THE U.S. SEEMS READY TO GET INVOLVED ONCE AGAIN: AN INVITATION TO WASHINGTON FOR ABBAS AND SHARON WAS MADE AND THE NOMINATION OF A U.S. MONITOR FOR SECURITY IN THE REGION WAS ANNOUNCED. ABBAS AND SHARON CAN BECOME PARTNERS FOR PEACE, BUT ONLY IF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION FORCES THEM TO."

"ASSETS"

GERARD DUPUY IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (02/08): "WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM TODAY'S SUMMIT IN SHARM EL-SHEIK. WE MUST NOT ASSUME THAT ARAFAT WAS THE OBSTACLE TO PEACE. THE CONTRADICTIONS WHICH MADE THE OSLO ACCORDS FAIL WERE REAL CONTRADICTIONS. THESE NEED TO BE OVERCOME. PRESIDENT BUSH MADE THE TOPPLING OF SADDAM AND HIS REGIME A NECESSARY CONDITION TO DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. TODAY, PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT APPEARS TO BE A PREAMBLE TO WASHINGTON'S DISENGAGEMENT FROM IRAQ. BUSH'S SUPPORT FOR THE PEACE EFFORT CARRIES ITS OWN ULTERIOR MOTIVES. THE BEST ASSET OF THE SUMMIT IS TODAY'S LARGE SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL SUPPORTERS FOR THE CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. AND THE FACT THAT AMONG THE PALESTINIANS SO MANY ARE DOUBTING THAT ARMED STRUGGLE IS THE BEST WAY TO CREATE A VIABLE PALESTINIAN STATE."

"PEACE TO BE PLAYED OUT IN EGYPT"

HENRI VERNET IN POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE PARISIEN (02/08):

"SHOULD WE EXPECT A MIRACLE? WHO KNOWS? BUT THE FACT IS THAT THIS SUMMIT MARKS A DECISIVE AND SYMBOLIC TURNING POINT. LET US THEN AVOID TRIUMPHANT ATTITUDES BUT LET US ALSO BE DECIDEDLY OPTIMISTIC. MANY THINGS HAVE CHANGED. INCLUDING THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW SECRETARY OF STATE WHO IS RE-DISCOVERING MULTILATERALISM. WHILE ARAFAT WAS NOT SOMEONE WASHINGTON WANTED TO SPEAK TO, (CONTRARY TO FM BARNIER, RICE DID NOT DEPOSIT FLOWERS ON HIS TOMB) ABBAS IS A PROPER INTERLOCUTOR. HE HAS BEEN INVITED TO WASHINGTON. FACED WITH THE AMERICAN BULLDOZER, FM BARNIER IS TRYING TO MAKE FRANCE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION EXIST." LEACH